

Appropriations Committee
Thursday, March 3, 2022

Senate Bill 106: AN ACT CONCERNING LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT AND APPROVAL FOR THE EXPENDITURE OF FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING - Support

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France, and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Travis Woodward, I am a resident of Hamden, and an engineer in the Connecticut Department of Transportation. I am also the president of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union representing over 23,000 state, municipal, board of education, active and retired, public and private sector workers, including the engineers and other transportation professionals in the Connecticut Department of Transportation. I offer the following testimony in support of Senate Bill 106: AN ACT CONCERNING LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT AND APPROVAL FOR THE EXPENDITURE OF FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING:

The historic federal investment in transportation through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act has the potential to not just improve our State's roads and highways, but to massively enhance how we travel. If this money is spent wisely and strategically, we have the ability to slash traffic delays, make our roads safer, and provide a foundation for substantial and far reaching economic growth. By giving the General Assembly a substantive role in how this money is spent, Senate Bill 106 will help ensure that these federal dollars are distributed in a manner that is consistent with the needs of everyone who travels in or through Connecticut.

The people I work alongside with in the DOT are excited about this challenge, but there are some important issues we want to highlight for you:

1. DOT is critically understaffed. Connecticut is competing with every state in the union for the talent required for what is a national transportation upgrade, and in order to succeed we need to make sure we are attracting the engineers and other transportation professionals we need;
2. In-house staff at the DOT can do it better, faster, and for less. Based on the [cost-effectiveness evaluations](#) conducted by the DOT, Connecticut wastes over \$100,000,000 a year on outsourcing engineering and construction inspection services alone.
3. Proper oversight reduces the misuse of funds. The oversight envisioned by this bill is important, but it is not the only precaution that needs to be in place for the expenditure of these funds. That is why we encourage you to fully fund and staff the State Contracting Standards Board. Legislative oversight coupled with the work, expertise, and authority of the Board will protect taxpayer dollars.

The federal infrastructure package will bring money and opportunity to Connecticut. It would be wise to invest in the state workforce and the Contracting Standards Board while reducing our need to use higher costing outside consultants. A properly staffed DOT, a fully funded Contracting Standards Board, and the protections outlined in Senate Bill 106 are a powerful combination that will help pave our road to success.

I would like to thank you for hearing my testimony.

Travis Woodward
President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001